

The Weakest go to the Wall,
OR THE
Dissenters Sacrific'd
BY ALL
PARTIES:
BEING

A true state of the DISSENTERS
CASE, as it respects either *High-Church*
or *Low-Church*.



L O N D O N: ?

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The Weakest go to the Wall,
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PARTIES, &c.



HERE are some People so remarkably Unhappy in the World, and so particularly Stated, that what Side soever gets uppermost, they are always undermost; whoever wins, they lose; and whoever mounts the Saddle, they are sure to hold the Stirrop.

This seems to have been the Case of the Dissenters in *England*, in all the several changes that have happened in the State from the Restoration to this Day; and seeing that the Complaints which the Dissenters have made of their Treatment in these Cases have been so little regarded, it may not be amiss distinctly to state to the World, the Behaviour of the Dissenters in all the said several changes of publick Affairs, with respect to the State; how they have deserved of, and how they have been treated by the several Parties, as those Parties have gotten the upper hand of one another; by which we shall see who are in the right, *viz.* Whether the blame laid by them, *the Dissenters*, on the Government for Mal-treating them, or the blame laid by the respective Parties on them, *the Dissenters*, for being dangerous to the Publick, be with the greater strength of Reason and Justice.

That the Dissenters have been loaden with Scandal, and reproach'd with being Enemies to the Government upon all Occasions, is better known than the Reason why it has been so. It is true, the respective Princes on the Throne, have

have been supposed to be the Principals in all the Afflictions and Sufferings of the Dissenters; but nothing is more certain than that, however the reigning Prince has been made use of as the Instrumental Cause of the Dissenters Injuries, it has been the effect of meer Party Management, as this or that side of either High or Low Church obtain'd the Administration; so that the King's being in effect Passive, tho' literally Active, therein, the Dissenters have been Persecuted or Spar'd, not as the Inclination of their Princes stood to them, but as those Princes were acted by their Ministry of this or that Party.

It is certain, that this discovers an unhappy Truth, which it may be useful to observe here, *viz.* How much the Princes of this Nation have all along been influenc'd by Parties, and how they have subjected themselves to the management of their Ministry, even to the Oppression of their People. The Enquiry of this Tract shall be directed, *First*, To the Behaviour of the Dissenters to either of the said Parties. *Secondly*, The Treatment of the Dissenters by the said Parties; and *Thirdly*, To decide these Questions.

1. Whe-

1. Whether the Dissenters have been justly and friendly dealt with or not by either Side ?

2. What may be the Consequences of the Methods now taking with them ?

3. What the Dissenters ought to do in the present Conjunction of their Affairs, and how they ought to behave to the present Parties respectively.

What necessary Inferences are to be drawn from these things, shall be directed impartially to every Side, Party, or Interest of Men among us.

The Presbyterian Part of the Dissenters declar'd themselves early for the Monarchy, long before the Death of *Cromwell* ; detesting the Murder of the King, and declaring that the End of their taking Arms, was for the Defence of their Liberties only, and with no Design in the least to dethrone the King their Sovereign : Much less to dissolve the Government it self ; and least of all, to take the Blood of the King, whose Person they held as Sacred, as any others could pretend to hold it.

In the Prosecution of these Principles, they made Sundry Attempts to pull down, not *Oliver* only, but all the Usurpations

pations of the executive Power and Authority which were made before him, in which many of their Leaders, as well as Ministers, lost their Lives by the Hand of the Executioner.

In the Restauration, they had such a leading Influence, that it has frequently been acknowledg'd by the King himself, that it could never have been effected without them.

It would be too severe a *Satyr* on the Memory of King *Charles II.* and what the Native Goodness of his Disposition does not deserve; to say that the Treatment these People met with, in a very little time after his Establishment was, from, or with the Consent of his Inclination. It is well known, he was a Prince, who tho' he had Infirmities, too many to mention, and which Charity leaves to sleep with him in his Grave, yet had the most Benign, Mild and Merciful Disposition imaginable, with a Softness and Tenderneſs which prevail'd on him to that degree, as it was often with great Difficulty that he could be brought to sign a Warrant for the Execution of Malefactors; and he would frequently say, That he heartily with't that Business was left to the Judges, by an
Act

Act of Parliament ; and that he might have nothing to do , but to save the Lives of his People, and spare those that were left to his Mercy.

Yet such was the Influence of Parties, such the Malignancy and Inveteracy of Factions and Divisions in the Court, that within four Years after that Restoration, in which the said Dissenters were so Instrumental, the Penal Laws were put in Execution against the Dissenters, divers others dayly Enacted, to restrain them not in matter of Power or Privilege only, but in matters meerly Religious, and the meer Exercise of worshipping God, according to the Dictates of Conscience.

I see no End of Entring into the Detail of the Sufferings of the Dissenters on this Account ; nor is it the design of this Tract, to leave any thing upon Record so much to the Reproach of the Nation, as this would be. The Fines, the Imprisonments, the Scandal and Reproaches cast upon the Dissenters ; these all serve to make good what is noted above, *viz.* that it was all brought about by the Influences of Parties and Politick Statesmen, for the carrying on their private Designs, contrary to the Inclination of
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the King as he often declared; otherwise what need of all those Slanders and Reproaches, Misrepresentations, and false Accusations, Suspitions and Surmises, all of them being so many Artifices, made use of, as the Parties prevailed to bring the King to comply with their Design, and to prepare the Way for the Projects they had laid, and make the Persecution of the Dissenters appear Reasonable.

As the respective Interest of these Parties with the King ebb'd and flow'd, so the Favour shewn to the Dissenters slacken'd or increased; but it was always observ'd, That if ever the King acted himself, the Dissenters found their Persecutions abate: Not that the King inclin'd towards them in Religion, for his End shew'd what was his Inclination that way; but he being naturally of a Clement, kind Disposition, chose rather to be easie to every Body, than to push their Misfortunes, which made the old Duke of B — swear by his Maker, that he believ'd if the Priests would let the King alone, he would turn as Errant a Presbyterian as he was, meaning himself.

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In the Prosecution of this Paper, I may come to let you see that the same Case seems to be now upon the Stage, and that what ever Evils the Dissenters shall suffer at this time, they flow all from the miserable Distraction of our Divisions, and the Animosities of Parties; only with this difference, That the Dissenters as aforesaid, let what Side will prevail, are sure to be Persecuted and Opprest, whereas before, one Side only Persecuted them, and the other delivered them up to Persecution.

But to return to the former Times, Persecution having been begun by the *High-Church* against the Dissenters, and all the Merit of their Zeal; for the Restoration being forgotten, their Enemies let loose upon them, and new Laws, such as the *& Cetera* Oath, Corporation Act, &c. made farther to suppress them. Let us see how their Friends, the *Low-Church*, or as they just then began to be call'd *the Whigs*, treated them.

Here we shall see that what ever has been the Pretences, and however the Dissenters have endeavoured to serve and oblige either one Side or other, they have always been forsaken and given up.

It

It was about the time when the late Earl of *Shaftsbury*, with the Duke of *Bucks*, and several other Statesmen first appear'd against the Court Interest, That the Dissenters had obtained some Recess. The Second Persecution as it may be call'd, had abated, and the Subtilty of some Statesmen having work'd the Court up to some Uneasyness on the *High-Church* Side, the Jealousie of Popery began to be Popular, and the Country Party, so they were then call'd, had obtained a Footing in the Ministry.

The Earl of *Shaftsbury* contrives the Act, call'd the Test Act, and caused it to be brought into the House, in Order to keep all the Papists in *England* out of Places, as he afterwards did another Bill to Exclude them from the *House of Lords*.

When this Act was first brought upon the Stage, the Court was against it, that was to be expected; but the *High-Church* opposed it also, which was a Difficulty, that the other Party knew not how to get over; but at last, knowing the hatred they had to the *Phanaticks*, this cunning Statesman lays a Hook for the *High Church*, baited with *Phanatick*, contriving to draw them all in to Close with the Bill, for Excluding

the Papists by telling them the *High Church*) that this Bill, as it would exclude all the Papists in the Kingdom on one hand, so it would all Fanaticks on the the other; and so the Churchmen would be sure to enjoy all the Honours, Trusts and Preferments in the Nation.

He knew this would take with the High Church, but how to wheedle the Dissenters to submit to it that, he found very difficult; yet it must be done, they must not only be brought to acquiesce, but to court the Mischief, and be active in it even upon themselves.

This was about the Year 1672. upon which the famous Test-Act was framed 25. *Car. II. cap. 2.* whereby all Persons who should enjoy any Place, Office, or Employment of Trust or Profit, Military or Civil in the whole Kingdom, were obliged to take the Oaths therein appointed, and to take the Sacrament after the usage of the Church of *England*, on the Penalty of 500 *l* besides other incapacitating and disabling Clauses, such as to be disabled to Sue or use any Action, Bill, Plaint or Information in course of Law, or to prosecute any Suit in any Court of Equity, or to be Guardian of any Child, or Executor, or Administra-
tor

to; of any Person, or capable of any Legacy or Deed of Gift, or to bear any Office within the Kingdom, &c.

It is remarkable the Title of this Act is, *An Act to prevent Dangers arising from Popish Recusants*: The Title was specious, the Zeal of the Dissenters against Popery was well-known, and the Bill bearing a Title respecting the Papists, the Dissenters were not alarm'd at all at it, few of them knew the Extent of the Bill, or that they were any ways concern'd in it.

When it was brought into the House, Alderman LOVE, Member of Parliament for the City, and a Dissenter, saw into the Particulars, and presently found that the Dissenters were involv'd in the Penalty of the Bill; and applying himself to my Lord Shaftsbury, he spoke seriously to him about it, Representing that the Bill was pretended to be directed against the Papists, that the Dissenters being ready at all times to join with the Church against Popery, had made no opposition to the Bill, but that it was evident by the Tenour of this Bill, the Dissenters would be equally involved in the Penalty, tho' not equally guilty of the Crime; for that Popery was judg'd Destructive to the whole frame of the Constitution,
and

and Papists were already voted Dangerous to the State; whereas, the Dissenters being Protestants, and already under the restraint of divers Laws, were in the same Interest with the Church as to their opposition to Popery, and unable any way to act contrary to the State Interest; entreating his Lordship that if the said Bill was aim'd at the Dissenters, he would be plain with him, and let him have it from his own Mouth; and that then they knew what Measures to take, and what they had to do; and if there was no such design, then he beg'd of his Lordship, the Dissenters might not be ruined *per Accident*, and that Provision might be made in the Bill to except the Dissenters, and prevent their falling into the Snare with the Papists, against whom the Bill was really and openly directed

My Lord told him, That it was far from their Thoughts that the Protestant Dissenters should be involved in the Mischief he apprehended, much less that that they should be rank'd with Papists either in the Opinion of the Legislature, or in the penalty of the Law, and promised to take care of it.

But the Bill went on in the House, and was push'd warmly by the Interest of the
said

said Lords; and the Country Party, *not having yet the Appellation of Whigs*, in the Lower House; when Mr. LOVE afore-said, applying to my Lord Shaftsbury the second Time, to the same purpose as before, *My Lord told him he found a strong Opposition from the Court Party against the Bill, and that they had drawn in a great many Church Men to oppose it; and Mr. Love says my Lord, if we should but mention a Clause of Exception to them for the Dissenters T E T, we shall certainly lose the Bill, which being of the utmost Consequence to the Safety of the Protestant Religion against Popery, it would be the Ruine of the Dissenters and of the Church too in the End.* It is very hard my Lord said Mr. Love, *That the Dissenters who are Protestants, should suffer under the same Predicament as Popish Recusants, and that the Protestant Religion cannot be secur'd without our Ruin: Those Gentlemen, who your Lordship says oppose the Bill, are it seems Protestants, and ought at least to have as much concern for the Protestant Religion as the Dissenters; and if they will oppose the Bill, unless the Dissenters are given up to them for a Prey, we may much better oppose the Bill to prevent our immediate Ruin; upon which Words Mr. Love took his Leave, and was retiring.* But

My Lord Shaftsbury call'd him again, Mr. Love, says my Lord, I shall be very sorry to see the Dissenters appear to oppose a Bill, against Popery, and especially at a time when it is so absolutely necessary to the publick Good, and that without it the Papist Party, and the Court Party who are now joyn'd, will break in upon our Liberties, and ruine the whole Nation ; I have thought of an Expedient for it, which is this ; if you will acquiesce that this Bill may pass, we will promise you that we will have another Bill brought in, on purpose to explain this Act, and excepting the Protestant Dissenters, restrain it to the Popish Recusants, according to the Title.

Mr. Love who knew the Danger, was unwilling ; but finding they were resolved to push the Bill, and considering the odium it would bring on the Dissenters, if they should cause so good a Law to be thrown out : He acquiesced upon the solemn Engagement as aforesaid, to give them a Clause of Qualification, as it was called, and thus the Bill pass'd, as for the Promise they never thought more of it.

Thus the Dissenters were cheated by the ———— for the first Time, how

how often they have been so serv'd since, time will discover.

This Act was no sooner past, but it began to affect the Dissenters, the Papists being but little concern'd in it, and the general Bent of this Act has since that been to suppress the Dissenters; the *Low-Church* Men were the Men who brought it in, all the Promises they made to the Dissenters were forgot, and all the Attempts which have been made since that to exempt the Dissenters from the Penalties of it have been rendred vain, and been principally opposed by the *Low-Church* Men as they are now call'd, as we shall most effectually prove in the Process of these Sheets; notwithstanding the readiness which the Dissenters have upon all Occasions shew'd to serve and support their Interest.

It was not many Years after this, before the Church of *England* came into such Circumstances, as that it was very much in the power of the Dissenters to have requited this Ingratitude of that Party; and this was when King *James* came to the Crown, who having a design to bring the Papists into publick Trust and Employment, carels'd the Dissenters with all the Art and Craft that it was pos-

sible to use, and shewing them the Bait, viz, the Repealing this Act, doubted not to bring the whole Body of the Dissenters into the Snare, and by their help to get this Test-Act, as well as the other Penal Laws, by which the Dissenters had been persecuted, Repealed.

It is more to be wondred at, that any of the Dissenters, considering how they had been treated, should refuse this advantageous Offer, than that a few were drawn into it; the Dissenters might very well have argued, *That* altho' it might be true, that this Act being repealed, the Papists would enjoy the Benefit of it, yet *That* their Duty was to recover their lost Liberty, and they were not to stand in their own light, and refuse the Advantage of securing their Religious Liberty, which if they omitted then, might never be offered again, and all this upon the pretence that Papists would reap the Advantage in Conjunction with them; *That* there might be other ways to prevent Popery coming in, without entailing a spiritual Bondage upon themselves and their Posterity, on a pretence of the fear of Popery; *That* Popery was kept out before this Act was made, and might be afterward; *That* if
not;

not, it was their indispensible Duty to restore themselves and their Families to the native Rights of Subjects and Christians, and to leave the Issue to God's Providence. THESE had been very just Arguments, and the Dissenters had all the Reason in the World, had they regarded their Interest as Dissenters, to have pleaded thus for themselves, and have Join'd with King *James* for the Repealing the said persecuting Act.

But the Dissenters acted from another principle, and laying aside the Views of their private interest as Dissenters, They considered themselves as Protestants, and as *English* Men, the Church party was then, by the sense of common Danger, United against the Invasions of a Popish Government and an Arbitrary Prince; Whig and Tory had been some years known indeed, but began now to be lost, and the Debates run all between Liberty and Arbitrary Power, Protestant and Papists: *The Dissenters* came into the sense of the Common Danger, and laying aside the Memory of their former ill Usage, generously Join'd against the Popish King, quitted the Advantage which they had of Repealing that Act, and chose to lye at the Mercy of the

Church, whether *High* or *Low*, rather than abandon the publick Safety ; and thus, *a very few excepted*, the whole body of the Dissenters joyn'd in the Invitation of the Prince of *Orange*.

It is true, they Capitulated for the having a Legal Tolleration established for them by Act of Parliament, which was afterwards perform'd by the Church of *England* Men, in the first of *William* and *Mary*, Cap. xvii. which is the Act of Tolleration which we now enjoy.

The Dissenters have been blam'd, and that justly too, That when this happy Treaty of Agreement was made between them and the Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy of the Church of *England*, for the Defence of the Protestant Religion, and of the *English* Liberties, they had not entred into the Particulars, and condition'd also for the preserving themselves from the future Incidents, which were so evident, as that they could not be said not to foresee them, (*viz.*) such as an Exemption of Protestant Dissenters from the said Sacramental Test ; the accepting the Affirmation of those who Conscienciously scrupled to take an Oath ; the allowance of Schools and Tutors, as
well

well for the common Instruction of their Children, as for preserving the Succession of their Ministers, as in all ages and places where Treaties of Religion have been made, it has been the Custom to do; Examples of which are frequent, such as in *Silesia, France, Germany, Hungaria*, and the like.

But the Dissenters over-straining their Generosity, and believing that they had so far convinc'd the Church of *England*, that they were no way Dangerous to their Constitution, as might be seen in that they preferr'd the safety of the said Church of *England* before any private Advantages, which as Dissenters, they had then the offer of; and believing they had so far obliged the Church, as that there could not possibly be any Civil breaches between them hereafter; That having Granted them a Tolleration by Parliament, they could never pretend to restrain them from Educating their Youth, and breeding up Ministers to Preach to them; they left all these things to the Generosity and Gratitude of the Church of *England*, and Contented themselves with a bare Exemption from Penalties of Laws, which tho' for some time, and by long usage, it obtain'd the Name of a
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Tolleration, yet we have lived to see the people who Granted it, Grow sick of the Grace, forget the Obligation laid upon them by the Dissenters, or the Bargain made with the Dissenters for Charity and Forbearance, and denying that Law the honour of being called a Tolleration, Take away every Privilege from the Dissenters which the Letter of the said Tolleration has not formally vested them in, not regarding those things which are the natural Consequences of a Tolleration, and which, notwithstanding they are not expres'd therein, yet the said Tolleration cannot subsist without; such as their Educating of Ministers, without a succession of whom, the Tolleration is really no Tolleration.

Now let us view quietly the first steps of this grateful Treatment, by which we shall see the great Cause the Dissenters have to see, that let them act in what Manner, or what Party they think fit, both will in their turn give them up, both will keep them under foot, both sacrifice them upon every occasion to their private or common Interest; and that therefore the Dissenters ought to bethink themselves in time how to take new Measures to act in a sphere of an independant Relation, and
so

so to govern their particular Interests, that they may as little as possible be made Tools and Properties of to carry on the Interests either of one Party or another, without being better secur'd, that they shall not, at last, be the price of a Reconciliation of all Parties.

No sooner was the Revolution compleated, and the Church of *England* restored by the influence and assistance of the Nation's deliverer, King *William*, but they who had so lately stood in need of the Dissenters, and receiv'd from them so eminent Services, began to repent the Gratitude they had shewn them in the Tolleration, and expressing their Dissatisfaction that they had granted so much, opposed warmly the very first motion made for extending the Advantages of the Tolleration.

This was eminently discover'd in their rejecting a motion made by King *William* in his Speech to the Parliament, for the performing that Promise I just now mentioned, to have been made by my Lord *Shaftsbury*, (*viz.*) Of exempting the Dissenters from the said Test, which as his Majesty declar'd, the Tolleration could not be effectual without; so he in that Speech thought the Nation wanted
to

to strengthen them against the common Enemy; this Speech was made the 16th of March 1688. and is as follows.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Now I have the occasion of coming hither to pass this Bill, which I hope will be for all our Satisfactions, I shall put you in Mind of one thing which will conduce much to our Settlement, as a Settlement will to the disappointment of our Enemies.

I am, with all the Expedition I can, filling up the vacancies that are in Offices and Places of Trust by this late Revolution.

I know You are sensible there is a necessity of some Law to settle the Oaths to be taken by all Persons to be admitted to such Places. I recommend it to Your Care to make a speedy Provision for it; and as I doubt not but You will sufficiently provide against Papists, so I hope You will leave room for the admission of all Protestants that are willing and able to serve.

This Conjunction in my Service, will tend to the better uniting You amongst Your selves, and the strengthening You against your common Adversaries.

It is hardly to be imagin'd with what Ill-nature and Reflections this Recommendation, however just in it self, however needful for the publick Good, and however proper at that time for the Service, of his Majesty, was rejected even as if it had been an attempt made upon the whole Church of *England*; as if the
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Test-Act had been made entirely and singly against the Dissenters, and not against Papists; and as if one had been equally dangerous to the Church as the other.

The King was surpriz'd at it, and wonder'd to find such a Temper in the Churchmen, while the Sence of their Deliverance was yet so fresh upon them; and while the Dangers they had been delivered from, and the assistance the Dissenters had given them were, or ought to have been so fresh in their Memories.

But the King saw there was nothing to be done, and was obliged thereby to refuse the Offers which divers Dissenters had made him, to raise Regiments for his Service, and to serve in Person in the War then coming on; one would have thought after this, the Dissenters should never have flatter'd themselves with the hopes of any fair treatment from their Enemies, and should have been very wary how they gave themselves up any more for their Service; but we can no more avoid than foresee our Fate.

We find no attempt made in favour of the Dissenters for some years after this, but several attempts against them, some
D times

times by *High-Church*, sometimes by *Low-Church*, as their private Parties and Interests made it necessary for them to make their Court to one another at the Dissenters Expence.

About the latter end of the late King, the Church-men themselves fell out, and began to divide into *Hhigh-church* and *Low*, as the Whigs did afterwards into *Old Whig* and *Modern*. The King died in the height of this breach, and the Queen coming to the Throne, *High-Church* got the Reins of the Administration; but drove so furiously, that *Phaeton* like, they set the whole Nation in a flame, and obliged her Majesty to change Hands in order to pursue those wiser and more prudent measures, which her own merciful Inclination, and the Council of better Heads directed her to

The Product of this first Precipitation was, that these Men fall upon the Dissenters, *Jehu* like, to shew *their Zeal for the Lord*, and to make the People of *England* believe, that all the rest of their proceedings were Calculated for the Good of the Church of *England*; the many extravagant things they did at that time, deserve rather to be forgotten than remembered, that we might make room for that
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universal Charity and Peace which we still hope sometime or other this Nation may be bless'd with. But Two must be mention'd for a Specimen : *The one* was, Their Addressing the Queen to extend her Prerogative, an Address we never saw a parallel of, and had not *England* been blest with a Queen equally concern'd for the Liberties of her People, as for her own Safety, Who knows how far it might have been extended at that time ? *The other* was, **The Occasional Bill**, Three times brought into the House, as often Thrown out by the meer Influence of the Court, and at last the Party thrown out that push'd it forward.

These Occasional Bills were all founded on the **Test-Act**, which it was alledged the Dissenters had Evaded the force of, by an Hypocritical Compliance with the **Church of England** Ceremonies in Communion, at the same time that they pretended Conscientiously to dissent, and to Continue to do so after they had Conform'd, only by way of qualification.

In this Article of Occasional Conformity, the Dissenters were *at first* attack'd by *High-Church*, and the faint Opposition of *Low-Church* was such, as that the Dissenters were not oblig'd to the *Low-*

Church Men for the loss of that Bill, so much as to the Obstinacy of the *High-Church*, who depending upon their own strength, refus'd to comply with one trifling Amendment of the Lords, which they would gladly have abated afterward, and so lost their Bill; so that in this first Bill it was evident, that both Parties, the *High* and *Low* agreed in the main thing, (*viz.*) to give them up, and that the Occasional Conformity of the Dissenters should be suppress'd.

In the second *Occasional Bill*, it was plain both Parties had left them again, had not the Queen interpos'd, and that the Tenderness of her Majesty, and Her Concern to Unite the minds of all her People, was the foundation of all the Opposition made to the Bill, and the Influence which her Majesty, and by her especial Direction the Court Party had upon the Nobility, were in a great measure Instrumental to prevent the Consequences, and so the said Bill was Thrown out. *The third* attempt was the Tack, which Untack'd the *High Church* Party, and put an end to the thing.

In this part the late Ministry being Establish'd, and new Hands employ'd in every part of the Administration, the whole

whole *Low-Church* strength had appear'd against the Bill, insomuch that it was made a meer *Dr. Sacheverel* to the Nation, made the *Low Party* popular, and brought the Tacking Members into such Contempt, that the next House of Commons were of a quite differing Temper than the last. This was that famous *English* Parliament, the last of that Name, wherein Mr. *Smith* was Chosen Speaker against the *High-Church* Party, who Voted for Mr. *Bromely* now Speaker; by which Parliament, the Union which had been finished by Treaty, and ratified in *Scotland*, was Passed and Exemplified.

If a *Whig* Parliament may ever be supposed to do any thing to the Ease and Relief of the Dissenters, it might ha' been expected from that Parliament, and this is the Reason why so much is said of the Circumstances of their Sitting; They had so much Temper, and so extensive a Charity, as to Ratify and Pass the Act of Security for the *Presbyterian* Church of *Scotland*, under the Title of *Establishing the true Protestant Religion*; they shewed all possible tenderness and moderation in several Cases which came before them, and the Dissenters had so much hopes from them,

them, that it began to be the general Opinion, That then was the only time that the Dissenters might expect, and ought to get the *Test Act* Repealed.

Some indeed dissuaded the Attempt, and thought the Season not ripe, and that it would alarm the Nation, who by the *High Church* falling in with the hint, would be jealous of the Church, and do the Dissenters more harm than good; but others more Confident, and less Prudent, were for pushing their Fate, and put an Antient, Superannuated, tho' Good Man, upon the Attempt, who wrote a Paper against the *Sacramental Test* Address'd to the Parliament.

No sooner was this Paper published, but the *Low Church* Men in the House, whether they were afraid of being suspected to favour the Design, and should be represented in the Countries where they were chosen, as Enemies to the Church, and so should never be chosen again, or that they were really zealous against giving any Relaxation to the Dissenters, I know not; but certain it was, that THEY were the first that represented the Attempt, and moved the House to enquire for, and punish the Author of the said Paper.

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One would think the Dissenters might have learnt to have done making Compliments of themselves after this, either to one Church Party or another; but the measure of their Weakness, or of the Ingratitude of the other, was not yet fill'd up.

For no sooner was the late change made in the Ministry, and things began to take a new turn at Court, but the Dissenters, as has always been their Fate, felt the weight of the Storm, and whoever shall be Gainers, in the end of these things, we know not; but in the mean time it is evident, that either side make havock of the Interests of the Dissenters, and if at any time an occasion presents, will make a Peace with one another at the Dissenters expence.

Many People write warmly in favour of the Dissenters, and shew a Zeal for their Advantage, who cannot effectually direct them in these difficult times; They are a great body of Men, but not a united Body, not a concerted cemented Body; he that is a true Friend to the Dissenters, will advise them never to expect any thing from the Quarrels of Parties, and the Heats and Feuds of the State, except it be to be destroyed and de-

devoured, and to act between the Parties as People who have nothing else to expect.

Who would have thought, but that in this last Breach at Court, the *Low-Church* Men should have espoused the Dissenters as their Friends and faithful Allies, who had cleav'd to them in the worst of Times; stood hard and fast by them in every Exigence; had voted for them in every Election, and without their Votes, not one turn in the several Changes made in favour of the *Low-Church* could have been carried.

The Whigs cannot say that ever they had a struggle with the Tories, in which the said Tories did not over-match them in Elections, but for the Interest of the Dissenters; and that in all such nice occasions it was the Dissenters who turn'd the Scale in favour of the *Low-Church*: Can then any Man say, that the Dissenters had no reason to expect that the *Low-Church* Men should have been their Friends, much more that they should not have given up the Dissenters to their implacable Enemies? and yet such is the Gratitude of Parties. The first occasion which presented to the *Low-Church* Men, wherein they thought their Political Game

Game required it, they sold their Friends the Dissenters, and made a Sacrifice of them to their profess'd Enemy the Earl of N——m.

And yet such was Heavens Justice in the Case, that this Sacrifice which was to an Idol, not to God, had the success it deserv'd, for they were disappointed in their Bargain, and like the Infernals in *Milton*, being deceiv'd with the gilded Fruit, when they began to gather and eat, they found their Mouths filled with bitter Ashes: So the Reward of their Treachery and Ingratitude to the Dissenters, for it can bear no less a Term, was an utter disappointment, and to be in the same still or a more suppress'd Case than they were in before, from whence it would be strange if Heaven should ever deliver them by such Unrighteous means, or till they shall do Justice to those whom they have treated in that unexampled Manner.

We are next to come to what the *High-Church* will do with them: Of the Two these are the fairer, because these never profess'd any favour to the Dissenters; these always declar'd, That they thought them dangerous both to the Church and to the State; that the Liberty they had enjoy'd was too much; and

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that

that they took Liberties which were not granted them by Law ; and therefore it was something rational for the Dissenters to expect that whenever these Men came to a full exercise of Power, they would certainly fall upon the Dissenters, and restrain them as much as they were able.

Whether the Dissenters have done well or ill in aggravating and farther provoking the *High-Church* Men, who they knew all along to be their implacable Adversaries, this I will not determine ; and if the Dissenters had, as no doubt they were perswaded they had a probability in view by the opposition which they made to the *High-Church*, to overthrow their new Schemes, if, I say, they had a full Satisfaction of this, tho' they were mistaken, yet I cannot say they were so much to blame on that side.

But the mistake of the Dissenters has been in their not distinguishing between the *High-Church* Party meerly *as such*, and the *Court-Party* who then govern'd, and who altho' they were joyn'd with the *High-Church*, that is, had taken the *High-Church* in with them for the support of the Changes they had made,
and

and for the ballancing the discontented People who adhered to the late Ministry, yet were on several Accounts obliged to hold a Ballance between the *High Church* and the Dissenters, to prevent on one hand, the said *High-Church* in their too warm Attempts upon the Dissenters, and on the other hand, to restrain the Dissenters from any Encroachments upon the Church, and so to hold the Reins of the Administration between both, as that the respective Parties should not have been able to have push'd at one another.

This not only was the Wisdom of the Court to do, but it was absolutely necessary for them to do, and it is apparent they have done it as long as was possible, till the Dissenters having too absolutely and so long stood out, and the *High-Church*, on the other hand, impatient of any longer restraint, it may be said they the Ministry can do it no longer.

This was the only safe Game the Dissenters had to play, and this had preserv'd them, not that by this any thing had been required of the Dissenters which had not been agreeable to both their Principles and frequent Practises, and especially to their Interest; and let no Man mistake what is here said, as if I meant that the Dissenters should have fallen in with the

High-Church to back the Ministry, no not in the least; but I do not at the same time see what Call they had to fall in with the Party Men of the *Low-Church* against the Ministry.

The changes of Statesmen and Parties in the Court, has always been the effect of the heavings and strugglings of great Men to get into Places and Preferments; the Queen's Power, to name who she thinks fit to Administer her Government by, we cannot dispute, and so long as that Government is restrain'd and restricted within the limits of the Constitution, we may, with Justice to our selves, and Duty to our Country Acquiesce, nay we ought to do so.

Had the Dissenters nothing to hazard, were their Circumstances desperate, had they no Posterity to provide for, no Liberties which they ow'd to the favour of the Administration to preserve, and which by declaring themselves they might run the hazard of losing, more might have been said.

But as it was the business of the Dissenters seem'd to be, by an equal Conduct, to have reserv'd themselves for the Event of things, to have acted as *Englishmen*, Voted as they thought fit, and according to their Conscience upon all Occasions, carefully

fully cherish'd their Religious Concerns, made themselves as few Enemies as possible, provok'd nobody willingly, never have been Aggressors in any Breaches, and have let their Enemies have had no room to say, that they mingled their Religious Concerns with the several Factions in the State.

Had they done this, the Ministry had never had the least room for, much less have been brought to the necessity of letting the *High-Church* break in upon them, nor perhaps had the Ministry ever been in such a Circumstance, wherein it might be said of them that they cannot prevent it.

But our mistake has been, That we have look'd upon the Ministry in the State, and the *High-Flyer* in the Church, to be the same thing; it may be true, that they are at this time Allies, but that they are but one Party is a mistake, for they have been often Two, and may be so again; And why should not the Dissenters put themselves in a posture to have it be so again?

The Intention of the Ministry to have held this Ballance, if we would have suffer'd them, was plain in that Quotation out of a Book called *Faults on both Sides*, quoted lately in the *Flying-Post*, June 3. and taken from the aforesaid Book, p. 43. as follows.

But

' But these are not all the false and ma-
 ' licious Suggestions that the Junto Party
 ' have invented to inflame the Minds of
 ' their credulous Admirers. They tell
 ' them that nothing less is intended than
 ' a total Change of Hands; all Whigs to
 ' be turned out of the Ministry, and the
 ' Tories to Rule all; that the Dissenters
 ' must expect another Occasional Confor-
 ' mity Bill; nay even their precious Li-
 ' berty of Conscience will be taken away.
 ' We shall soon see whether they have
 ' any Ground for such Reports, or whe-
 ' ther they are altogether fictitious and
 ' false. Let honest Men but take Notice
 ' of, and remember the Persons who
 ' make it their Business to talk up these
 ' Stories in Conversation, that when they
 ' shall see the Event to be otherwise, they
 ' may know who are the Tools of the
 ' Party, and never more suffer them to
 ' impose upon their Credulity. In the
 ' mean time, I dare assure them, that *they*
 ' *have none of these things to fear*; and that
 ' her Majesty is as firmly resolved against
 ' all Extreams as they can wish; that she
 ' will bear equal Regard to Men that be-
 ' have themselves well of either Side,
 ' and desire that the Names of Parties
 ' and Factions may be buried in Oblivi-
 ' vion, and that we may have no other
 ' Mark,

' Mark of Distinction among us, that
 ' of Knaves from Honest Men; that they
 ' will find such of the Tories (as the
 ' People still call them) as shall be ad-
 ' mitted into the Ministry, will come into
 ' moderate Measures; and when any of
 ' them act otherwise, they will be laid
 ' by; and that the Queen has declared,
 ' as a Principle she will always stand by,
 ' *That she will never suffer herself to be pre-*
 ' *vailed upon to make the Dissenters uneasy*
 ' *by any Occasional Conformity Bill, or any*
 ' *thing like it; and that she will Inviolably*
 ' *maintain the Toleration they now enjoy.*

Here it is evident, that the Court professes
 to begin their new Administration with a
 view to moderate Measures, to keep every
 thing on the same foot as before, and that the
 Ministry design'd only to hold the Ballance be-
 tween the Contending Interests, preserving
 the respective Rights on either Side, if the
 Ministry are to be supposed Originally design-
 ing the ruine of one in favour of the other
 while they made these declarations, they must
 be supposed to be All that their worst Ene-
 mies can call them; but as there are some good
 Reasons to be given to prove this was never
 their INTEREST, and that thence we may
 believe without any flattery that it was not
 their Design, so we see but little to prove the
 Affirmative, That they had the wicked pur-
 pose aforesaid from the beginning.

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If the Tories have led them on farther than they intended to go, it must have been because the Tories are become more necessary than they were before, and therefore make their own Advantages of that Circumstance, and this must be from some Opposition which was not Expected, and which has driven the Ministry from their first Measures.

Whether the Dissenters have had any share in this or no, I will not determin, for this is not written to Accuse, but to Advise them; *if they have*, their Zeal may be good, but their Prudence will not be the better.

They may see now, that when the Tories fall upon them, the *Low-church* Men do not espouse them as Dissenters, some Vote against the Bill now Depending indeed, but they pretend not to do it in Favour of Dissenters, as a Religious Party, *there they all give us up*, but as Members of their Politick Party, and this has always been the fate of the Dissenters; *and will be so*, till it pleases God to give them a rectification of judgment to Conduct their Affairs so, as may make them bear some weight in the Commonwealth, and make it worth while to the Parties, both to preserve them, and preserve an Interest with them; then they would be true to their own Interest, and have many Opportunities put into their Hands to make themselves useful to their Country, which now they are depriv'd of.

FINIS.